

# **POEMS, PP. 4-83**

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Poems, pp. 4-83 by Will Foster

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**WILL FOSTER**

**POEMS, PP. 4-83**



Theodore Watts Erg.  
with the author's compliments.  
Jan 20, 1904.

P O E M S

Ex libris Walter Theodor Wills-Duntson.  
an Association Book, vide autograph  
inscription on first page of fly leaf,  
also A. C. S. of author inscribed after  
title page. Bought by me of W. Haffer and Sons,  
(Barkidlers) Petty Lane, Cambridge, on June 15<sup>th</sup>  
1910. When on a visit to my old University.  
W. P.

The little label "from the library of  
Walter Theodor Wills-Duntson which  
is fastened inside the cover, was placed there  
by Miss Haffer and Sons.

# POEMS

BY  
WILL FOSTER.

W. B. BELLERBY AND SON,  
SELBY.  
MDCCCIII.

TO  
FRANK T. BULLEN,  
OUR MODERN ULYSSES,  
I DEDICATE THESE VERSES  
IN ADMIRATION AND AFFECTION.



*The Vigil.*

I cannot picture even in thought  
What madness moved my spirit then—  
So calmly have the long years wrought,  
So long have I been far from men.

Life had no lure save by thy side ;  
The frantic battle-field I sought,  
And careless if I lived or died  
Like one invulnerable fought.

But in the moonlight when I stood  
And gazed upon the ghastly dead,  
The madness died from out my blood  
And from the murderous field I fled.

Upon the hollow-murmuring seas  
I sought to drown the battle's din,  
Hoping to find the wanderer's peace  
And pardon for my double sin.

And the low sobbing of the wave  
Answered the sobbing of my breast,  
And oft the soft green ocean grave  
Cried unto me to be at rest.

*To be at rest*—ah mocking cry !  
When the ship struck, of all the lost  
Death refused one ! I, only I,  
Living, upon the shore was tossed !

Spurned of the sea, for death unmeet,  
I stood upon the Holy Land;  
What bourne was mine? With aimless feet  
I trod the burning desert sand.

Beneath the deathly hills I stood  
Where grows no grass, no flower fair,  
And saw the Jordan roll his flood  
On the doomed cities buried there.

Within the Holy Sepulchre  
Amazed I watched at Easter-day  
The frenzied pilgrims, when the fire  
Burst from the tomb where Jesus lay.

Ever I wandered finding gloom—  
The havoc of the infidel—  
The desolate site, the mouldered tomb—  
O'er all the land a dreary spell.

No hopeful voices gladdened me,  
No unveiled women's faces smiled:  
The Moslem in his poverty  
Passed by the Greek as one defiled.

And never found I liberty  
Till on the hill-side I drew breath  
Beside the sea of Galilee,  
The white-walled homes of Nazareth.

As on the Monastery bare  
I gazed—I thought of you shut in  
By convent walls. I breathed a prayer,  
And passed to shrive me of my sin.

On chant and paternoster bent  
The monks in wonder gazed on me  
Who could not find their strait content  
Nor win their faith's simplicity.

Fain had they taught me to despise  
The world and all its fretful cares,  
Their simple soothing ministries  
To love, their life of fast and prayers.

Fain had I learned and sternly strove,  
But only years of chastening days  
Could quench the Self that even in Love  
Finds still a secret lurking place.

Not as of old my love for thee ;  
The warm and throbbing Past is dead :  
Such passion as in Heaven may be,  
Such gladness on my heart is shed.

In visions of the day and night  
I follow thy sweet ministry—  
The face so calm, the hands so white,  
The eyes so soft with charity.